

CARDIN, MIKULSKI AND CUMMINGS APPLAUD PASSAGE OF LEGISLATION TO HONOR ROBERT BALL

*Bill passed House and Senate to name Social Security building for champion of
Social Security Program*

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Senators **Benjamin L. Cardin** and **Barbara A. Mikulski** and U.S. Congressman **Elijah E. Cummings** (all D-MD) praised Wednesday's Senate passage of a bill to designate the Social Security Administration Operations Building, located in Baltimore, as the Robert M. Ball Federal Building. The bill, H.R. 5773, was initially introduced in the House by Congressman Cummings, where it passed in September.

"Robert Ball was one of the unsung heroes of the 20th Century. His commitment to ensuring the success of the Social Security program is unparalleled," said **Senator Cardin**, who pushed for passage of the bill in the Senate. "His skill and knowledge was also instrumental in the creation of Medicare. It is most fitting that we name the Robert M. Ball Federal Building in honor of the man whose expertise and understanding of the Social Security program helped ensure that millions of seniors and disabled individuals would no longer live in poverty."

"Social Security is a reliable, undeniable benefit. It is a lifelong benefit, an inflation-proof benefit, an earned benefit. Bob Ball committed his life to protecting and strengthening that benefit, and I can think of no better way to honor him than naming the Social Security building after him," **Senator Mikulski said**.

"It was a privilege to sponsor this bill, to vote for it in the House and to see it move to the President's desk," said **Congressman Cummings**. "Bob Ball was a man who dedicated his career to defending and strengthening Social Security and who helped to expand the safety net for our nation's seniors by aiding in the creation of Medicare. He was committed to the principle that Social Security was a contract between generations, ensuring that seniors could avoid poverty in their later years. I cannot imagine a better tribute to such a man than that his name be permanently attached to the building where Social Security operates."

Robert Ball was described by *American Scholar* magazine in 2005 as Social Security's "biggest thinker, longest-serving commissioner and undisputed spiritual leader" and as "Social Security's chief advocate and defender." He started working for the newly formed Social Security Board in 1939 as a field assistant in Newark, New Jersey. In 1949, Mr. Ball was appointed Assistant Director of the Bureau of Old Age and Survivors Insurance. He was subsequently promoted to Deputy Director and then Acting Director.

Ball was the architect of the 1950 amendments raising benefits and expanding Social Security coverage to more Americans, including such groups as the self-employed, and making it easier for these groups to begin to qualify for benefits. He also helped draft the legislation establishing Social Security disability benefits in 1956 and helped Congress secure its passage even though the Eisenhower administration opposed this change. In 1957, Ball helped Congressman Aime Forand draft a bill that was essentially the forerunner of Medicare. Ball continued to advocate for health insurance for seniors from that time until Medicare's eventual passage in 1965. For

this and his subsequent work supporting the implementation of the Medicare program, he is also known as the father of Medicare.

President John F. Kennedy appointed Robert M. Ball as Commissioner of Social Security in 1962, a post in which he diligently served longer than anyone else prior or since. A decade after his appointment, Mr. Ball helped develop the 1972 amendments that linked benefits to inflation, ensuring that Social Security would never fail to meet basic needs.

-##-